



Clean Air Congress **VOICE**

MARCH 2004

A Voice for Clean Air

AQMD is proud to bring you the first issue of the Clean Air Congress's newsletter, *Voice*. With each issue, we are committed to informing you about AQMD-related clean air activities in your area, educating you on new technologies for fighting the health hazards of air pollution, presenting ways you can continue to get involved, along with explaining air quality rulemaking and the effects the process has on our lives.

By joining the Clean Air Congress, you have taken the first step toward cleaning the air that we breathe. With your increased knowledge and active participation in clean air issues, we can unite our voices and work together toward the goal of clean air for all!

Clean Air Champion Jonah Ramirez

Eight-year-old Jonah Ramirez, an asthma sufferer, is already using his voice to make a difference for cleaning the air in the San Bernardino community. As the ambassador for the American Lung Association's Inland Empire chapter, he spoke at the recent California Air Resources Board Hearing, on behalf of the Air Quality Management Plan. He commented that air pollution is responsible for his asthma. He is a healthy, active kid who plays three outdoor sports, and is forced to breathe smoggy and polluted air.

"Something is wrong here," said Jonah. "No one in my family has asthma. No one in my family smokes."

Kids like Jonah prove that it is never too early to participate in the fight for clean air.



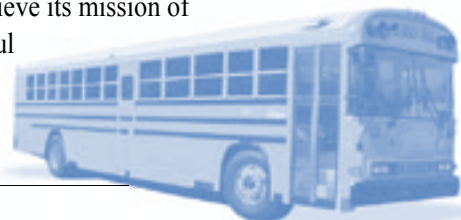
Photo by Leo Jarzomb, San Gabriel Valley Newspaper Group

Healthier Rides for Kids

In an attempt to protect children's health from cancer-causing diesel fumes, AQMD has set the scene for upgrading thousands of Southland area school buses to clean fuel technologies, using a variety of grant funds to pay school districts' additional costs.

At the February Board meeting, AQMD adopted a new air quality initiative committing \$12 million to replace and retrofit diesel buses. Top priority has been placed on natural gas powered buses and the installation of particulate traps on diesel school buses to reduce toxic emissions. Particulate traps are special devices designed to capture pollutants like soot or diesel exhaust.

By funding programs such as the clean bus initiative, AQMD is working hard to achieve its mission of accomplishing healthful air quality for its residents.



Small Business UPDATE

Roundtable

In an effort to address the needs of Southern California small business owners and operators, AQMD Governing Board members, Jane Carney, Jan Perry and Cynthia Verdugo-Peralta, hosted a Small Business Roundtable on January 16, 2004, with key government organizations that provide small business loans and financial assistance. Representatives from the Governor's Office of Planning & Research; U.S. Small Business Administration; California Air Resources Board; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX; California Capital Access Program; California Energy Commission and South Coast Air Quality Management District staff participated in this event.

The Roundtable focused on identifying small business assistance resources and programs available at the local, state and federal levels; defining financial assistance programs for providing clean air equipment, processes, technologies or other needs; and developing ways to assist small businesses reduce emissions in order to meet clean air goals as required by the 2003 Air Quality Management Plan.

To learn more about this event, contact Debra Reed at (909) 396-3199 or dreed@aqmd.gov.

DID YOU KNOW ...?

Clean Air Choices Helps New Car Buyers Identify Lower-Emitting Vehicles

Clean Air Choices, sponsored by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, is a website located at www.cleanairchoices.org that helps you make personal decisions benefiting the environment and improving air quality.

Check out the complete list of low-emission vehicles to help you recognize clean air choices in the dealer showroom. From full-size passenger cars and trucks to SUVs and mini-vans, you'll be amazed at the popular styles and wide selection of clean air vehicles. View our list of participating dealers to see where you can find vehicles with Clean Air Choices stickers.

Other parts of this website include useful information on reducing your personal exposure to toxic air pollution and reducing air pollution at home.

If you don't have access to a computer but would like more information about the Clean Air Choices program, call 1-800-CUT-SMOG (1-800-288-7664).



Clean Air Plan Approved

California Air Resources Board members unanimously approved a strengthened state and federal portion of the 2003 Air Quality Management Plan for the South Coast region, following an all-day public hearing on October 23, 2003.

The lively hearing, held in Diamond Bar, was attended by more than 400 interested residents, elected officials, business representatives, and school students, many of whom testified in favor of a greater state commitment toward reducing emissions.

Clean air plans are essential blueprints for action by AQMD. The agency is required to update its plans on a regular basis. Updates may take the form of a new plan, or an amendment. Plans range from the regional Air Quality Management Plan to plans dealing with specific pollutants in exact geographic settings.

Clean Air Awards

AQMD invites you to nominate worthy candidates for its 2004 Clean Air Awards, which will be held at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles on October 13. Individuals, businesses large and small, cities, media organizations and community groups are among those eligible (you can nominate yourself if you like). The Clean Air Awards honor those who have made a significant contribution to cleaner air through innovation, leadership and personal environmental commitment.

The awards are presented in five categories: Advancement of Air Pollution Technology, Innovative Transportation Projects, Model Community Achievement, Public Education on Air Quality Issues and Promotion of Good Environmental Stewardship. *If you would like an entry form, please call (909) 396-2432. Entry deadlines must be postmarked by May 28, 2004.*



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This news publication is produced by the South Coast Air Quality Management District's (AQMD) Public Affairs Office. AQMD is the air pollution control agency for Orange county and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties. *AQMD does not endorse or warrant any products, services or companies mentioned in this publication.*

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